

---

**George Blumenthal, Ph.D.**



George Blumenthal, Ph.D.

University of California, Santa Cruz

Chancellor

An executive officer from a California University

Appointed by Lieutenant Governor

George R. Blumenthal is UC Santa Cruz's 10th chancellor. He first joined the campus in 1972 as a faculty member in astronomy and astrophysics and was named chancellor on September 19, 2007, after serving as acting chancellor for 14 months. He was nominated to the CIRM governing Board in February, 2017 by Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom.

UC Santa Cruz is a top-ranked young university and has become a first-choice destination for a growing number of high school graduates. Since the fall of 2007, the number of applicants for undergraduate admission has doubled from 24,400 annually to nearly 49,000 in 2013.

The Blumenthal era has been marked by a commitment to ensuring that the doors of opportunity at UC Santa Cruz are open to all:

- The number of undergraduate students from underrepresented minorities has increased by 50 percent since Blumenthal took office.
- Nearly half of the entering class in 2013 received Pell Grants, the federal financial aid given to the neediest students—exceeding the UC average of 42 percent.
- The percentage of entering frosh who are "first-generation" college students—who will be the first in their family to earn a four-year degree—now regularly tops 40 percent.

Chancellor Blumenthal has overseen the expansion of both undergraduate and graduate programs. New undergraduate degrees include Cognitive Science, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Jewish Studies, Network and Digital Technology, Physics Education, Robotics Engineering, and Spanish Studies. New doctoral programs include Feminist Studies, Film and Digital Media, Latin American and Latino Studies, and Visual Studies; new master's programs include Games and Playable Media, Technology and Information Management, and Theater Arts.

Under Chancellor Blumenthal's leadership, the campus in 2013 launched its first comprehensive fundraising campaign, The Campaign for UC Santa Cruz. He has presided over significant growth in research funding, from \$100 million in 2006 to \$130 million in 2013. UC Santa Cruz has emerged as one of the top five institutions in the country that saw a notable increase in funding from the National Institutes of Health in the past decade, almost doubling from \$15 million in 2000 to nearly \$30 million in 2013.

The campus's physical profile has been dramatically transformed during Blumenthal's tenure as chancellor. Major new buildings that have opened include the Digital Arts Research Center, the Physical Sciences Building, the Humanities and Social Sciences Facility, the Biomedical Sciences Building, and the Emergency Response Center. Other major projects include the renovation and expansion of McHenry Library, the Cowell Student Health Center, Porter College, and Merrill College. In total, the campus has added nearly 600,000 square feet of new space since Blumenthal took office.

Sustainability has been a top priority of Chancellor Blumenthal's, and he has championed water and energy conservation, recycling, locally sourced and organically grown food, and greenhouse-gas reduction. In 2014, the campus used scarcely more water than in 1994, despite having nearly 7,000 more students. In 2012, the chancellor signed the Real Food Campus Commitment, pledging that 40 percent of all food purchases will be food produced in a fair, humane, and sustainable manner by 2020.

In Santa Cruz, Chancellor Blumenthal is widely credited with ushering in a new era of cooperation in town-gown relations with the signing in 2008 of a historic settlement agreement that resolved litigation over water, housing, traffic, and city services. Signed by the campus, the city and county of Santa Cruz, and neighborhood groups, the agreement has become a model for other universities and communities. Campus departments and municipal agencies now collaborate on a range of issues, including planning, water, and transportation, and the campus and city fire departments were consolidated in 2014.

Blumenthal's appointment as chancellor followed many years as a distinguished professor, researcher, and campus leader. As a theoretical astrophysicist, Chancellor Blumenthal made pathbreaking contributions to our understanding of the origin of structure in the universe, including galaxies and clusters of galaxies, and to the role that dark matter plays in the formation and evolution of this structure. He is a co-author of *21st Century Astronomy* and *Understanding Our Universe*.

As a senior leader in the University of California system, Blumenthal spearheaded the successful effort to redress past inequalities in per-student state funding of some UC campuses, known as "rebenching." He served as chair of the UC Academic Senate (2004-05), was the faculty representative to the UC Regents (2003-05), chaired the UC Santa Cruz division of the Academic Senate (2001-03), and served as chair of the UCSC Astronomy and Astrophysics Department.

In 2010, Blumenthal received the Oliver Johnson Award for Distinguished Leadership in the Academic Senate, the top UC honor for service at both the systemwide and campus levels. A vocal advocate for staff throughout the university, he received the Outstanding Senior Leadership Award from the Council of University of California Staff Assemblies (CUCSA) in 2012; he has been an honorary member of CUCSA since 2005.

Chancellor Blumenthal serves widely on many governing boards, including as vice chairman of the California Association for Research in Astronomy, which oversees the W. M. Keck Observatory on the summit of Mauna Kea, Hawaii. He is also a board member of Joint Venture Silicon Valley and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.

He earned his bachelor of science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and his Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, San Diego. In 2011, he was awarded an honorary Ph.D. in astrophysics and leadership in higher education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

He is married to Kelly Weisberg (see her biography), a professor of law at UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. They have two adult children.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/board-and-meetings/george-blumenthal-phd>